# AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR


Executive Council.

President, Samuel Gompers
Secretary, Frank Morrison
Treasurer, John B. Lennon
Washington, D.C.

First Vice-President, James Duncan
Hancock Bldg., Quincy, Mass.
Second Vice-President, John Mitchell
Chairmont Ave., Mount Vernon, N.Y.
Third Vice-President, James O'Connell
402 McGill Bldg., Washington, D.C.
Fourth Vice-President, D. A. Hayes
Wills Spruce Bldg., Philadelphia, Pa.
Fifth Vice-President, Wm. D. Huber
Carpenters Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind.
Sixth Vice-President, Jos. F. Valentine
Commercial Union Building, Cincinnati, O.
Seventh Vice-President, Chas. A. Bowers
401 E. Bush Temple of Music, Chicago, Ill.
Eighth Vice-President, H. B. Perham
Star Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE, MAIN 3871-2
CABLE ADDRESS, 'AFEL.


*Washington, D.C.,* April 8, 1911.

TO EDITORS:

Pursuant to action taken by the St. Louis convention of the American Federation of Labor directing the Executive Council to prepare and distribute a weekly letter, free of cost, to all publications devoted to the cause of labor or of a reformatory character, arrangements have been completed and the service is herewith inaugurated. It is aimed that accuracy shall be one of the chief characteristics in the dissemination of news affecting the interest of the workers and of the labor movement. The progress of legislation, national in character, affecting labor, will receive special attention. Important occurrences in the world of labor will be incorporated, brevity and condensation forming a distinguishing feature.

Realizing the potent influence of the labor press, appreciating its valiant struggle for justice in the past, it is hoped that the Weekly News Letter will give added impetus to our cause and materially assist editors in presenting to their readers a summary of live news of important events occurring anywhere.

Yours fraternally,

Attest:

Frank Morrison
Secretary, A. F. of L.

Sam'l Gompers.
President
American Federation of Labor.

# WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L. BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER FREE OF COST TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

Complete

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS
901 G STREET N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

Washington, D. C., April 8, 1911.

## LABOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

---

House of Representatives Contains Fifteen Members who are Members of Trade Unions.

---

## RESULT OF FOUR YEARS' EFFORT.

---

Inauguration of American Federation of Labor's Slogan to "Reward your Friends and Administer a Stinging Rebuke to our Enemies" has Borne Abundant Fruit.

---

Washington, April 8.--In 1906 the Labor Representation Committee of the American Federation of Labor decided to aggressively take the field against the re-election of certain Congressmen who had been conspicuous in their antagonism toward all labor bills introduced in Congress. Congressman Littlefield of the 2nd district of Maine, than whom there had been no more savage enemy of Labor, courted a battle in the political campaign of four years ago.

President Gompers, together with two or three organizers and a similar number of international officials, entered the Littlefield district and made a memorable struggle to impress upon the citizens of that district the desirability of permitting the belligerent congressman to remain at home. Mr. Littlefield, however, was re-elected by a greatly reduced majority. This entrance of labor into the political arena and its spectacular and heroic fight against such gigantic odds in the State of Maine subsequently crystallized into action, in various parts of the country, a determination on the part of trade unionists to follow the lead of the American Federation of Labor.

The first campaign of the trade unionists, that of 1906, secured the election of six congressmen with active membership in the trades unions:

Wilson of Pennsylvania,
Nichols of Pennsylvania,
Sherwood of Ohio,
Hughes of New Jersey,
McDermott of Illinois,
Carey of Wisconsin.

In the elections of 1908 the above were all re-elected, and in addition the following card men were added to the labor group:

Anderson of Ohio,
Murphy of Missouri,
Martin of Colorado,
Jamelson of Iowa.

A steady growth in numerical strength of labor members in Congress is shown. In 1906 six trades unionists were elected. The Fall of 1907 saw our lead increased by the addition of four more trades unionists, making ten in all. The Congressional elections of 1910 still further increased our numerical strength by 50 per cent,

there being fifteen members of Congress actively affiliated with the trades unions, as follows:

Wilson, W. B., Coal Miner, Blossburg, Pa., Democrat.
Lee, Richard E., Blacksmith, Pottsville, Pa., Democrat.
Martin, John A., Locomotive Fireman, Pueblo, Colo., Democrat.
Cary, Wm. J. Commercial telegrapher, Milwaukee, Wis., Rep.
Berger, Victor L., Typographical Union, Milwaukee, Wis., Soc.
Hughes, Wm., Textile Workers, Paterson, N.J., Democrat.
Buchanan, Frank, Str. Iron Worker, Chicago, Ill., Democrat.
McDermont, Jas. T., Commercial Telegrapher, Chicago, Ill. Dem.
Lewis, David J. Coal Miner, Cumberland, Md., Democrat.
Smith, Chas. B., R. R. Telegrapher, Buffalo, N.Y., Democrat.
Anderson, Carl O., Musician, Fostoria, Ohio, Democrat.
Sherwood, Isaac R., Typographical Union, Toledo, O., Democrat.
Roberts, E. E., Metal Miner, Carson City, Nev., Republican.
Farr, John R., Typographical Union, 5 Scranton, Pa., Rep.
Maher, James P., Hatter, Brooklyn, N.Y., Democrat.

---

## BUTTON WORKERS' LOCKOUT.

---

### Employes Locked Out in February Stand Loyal to Union.

---

Washington, April 8 - Information reaches A. F. of L. headquarters that Button Workers' Protective Union No. 12854 of Muscatine, Iowa. is still pluckily maintaining itself against the lockout precipitated by their employers over a month ago.

Correspondence from the secretary of this union, Miss Pearl McGill, conveys the information that many misleading reports are emanating from sources, suspected to be inspired by the employers, which does injustice to the Button workers. It is stated that the locked out men and women have conducted themselves in an exceedingly quiet manner during the entire course of the contest. It is quite possible that interests inimical to the employes are using every effort to discredit and discourage the members of the Button Workers' Union. Conditions in this industry have been very bad for years, and finally reached a climax a few weeks ago in the organization of the great bulk of button workers in the city mentioned.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS.

---

Labor Committee of National House Has Four Union Men On Its Roster.

---

WILSON, OF PENNSYLVANIA, CHAIRMAN.

---

Personnel of Important Congressional Committee Indicates Favorable Action Will Be Taken on Vital Matters.

---

Washington, April 8. - The assignment of members of the labor group to the various committees by the Democratic caucus has been agreed to. Up to this time the Republican minority has not selected its members on the various committees, therefore only Democratic labor member assignments are available at this time. Labor has the chairmanship of the Labor Committee, it going to W. B. Wilson. Assignments are as follows:

W. B. Wilson, Chairmanship Labor Committee; also member Mines Committee; also Merchant Marine Committee.

Richard E. Lee, Chairman Mileage Committee, also member Naval Affairs and Liquor Traffic Committees.

John A. Martin, Member Interstate and Foreign Commerce, Territories, also Committee on Expenditures in War Department.

William Hughes, Member Ways and Means Committee--This committee also is a committee on committees.

Frank Buchanan, Member Naval Affairs and Labor Committees

James T. McDermont, Member Agriculture and Expenditures Department of Commerce and Labor Committees.

David J. Lewis, Member Military Affairs and Labor Committees.

Charles B. Smith, Member Indian Affairs, Liquor Traffic and Irrigation Committees.

Carl C. Anderson, Member Invalid Pensions and District of Columbia Committees.

Isaac R. Sherwood, Chairman Invalid Pensions and Member Expenditures in Navy Department.

James P. Maher, Member Public Lands and Labor Committees.

## TRENCHANT CRITICISM

Boston's Foremost Publication Takes Issue with Postoffice Official.

The Boston Globe has the following editorial on the order of Second-Assistant Postmaster General, Joseph Stewart:

"To say that Mr. Joseph Stewart, second assistant postmaster general, was disingenuous in trying to make it appear that the union of the railway postal clerks is a secret organization, is to put it mildly.

"Mr. Stewart certainly knows that the railway mail clerks' union is not a secret body and that it is affiliated with the A. F. of L., one of whose fundamental rules regarding government employes is that they must obey the rules of their department, despite what they may think of the justice of such rules. In joining a union the postal employes take no 'secret oath' or obligation, and Mr. Stewart is guilty of lack of candor at least in saying that 'it is incompatible with the postal clerks' obligation to the department that they should assume another oath with a secret organization in the service which may at any time interfere with the obligations which they have assumed upon entering the service.'

"It is a short-sighted policy. It will not result in getting the best men for the service or in improving the service. Postal employes, being American citizens, will hardly submit to it."

## EIGHT HOURS FOR WOMEN.

California Legislature Enacts Shorter Workday for Women.

Washington, April 8 - The legislature of California has just passed a stringent eight hour workday law for women and Governor Johnson has signed it. The provisions of the new statute cover all occupations, save the exception that the law shall not affect the harvesting, curing, canning or drying of any variety of perishable fruit or vegetable. The penalty attached for violation cannot be less than $50 for each offense, and may reach $200, with a jail sentence of from five to thirty days, the latter discretionary with trial court.

Another bill was approved which provides for the manufacture of supplies by prison labor to be used exclusively by the institution conducted by the state. Safeguards are provided that convict labor will not come into competition.

CONFERENCE of UNION OFFICIALS.

---

Pennsylvania Railway System Subject of Conference at Pittsburg, Pa.

---

Washington, April 8 - Organizers representing the American Federation of Labor and the International Unions of Machinists, Carmen, Boiler Makers, and Blacksmiths have been engaged for some time in organizing the men employed by the Penna. R. R. Co. in the various repair shops on their system. Within the past few weeks several hundred shopmen were informed by officers of the Pennsylvania Railroad that unless they ceased their affiliation with labor unions they would be discharged. Members of Committees who waited upon the management and protested against the action of the officers of the company, were immediately dispensed with, together with officers and members who refused to withdraw from their unions. The company claims that they are reducing their force, but, at the same time, the men layed off were informed that if they ceased their affiliation with their unions they would be placed back at work.

The organizers state that with few exceptions, reports from various points are encouraging. The discharge of the men who are members of unions resulted in the holding of several mass meetings and a conference of the representatives of Sheet Metal Workers, Blacksmiths, Machinists, Boilermakers, Railway Carmen, and the representatives of the Brotherhoods of Engineers, Firemen, Conductors and Trainmen, with a representative of the A. F. of L. on Wednesday, April 5, in Pittsburg, Pa., for the purpose of taking such action as would result in preventing further discrimination against employes who were members of a union. It is expected that the combined influence of all the organizations will bring about an understanding that will prevent discrimination on the part of the officers of the company in the future.

It is asserted by the men that the company has instructed its officers to ask them whether or not they belong to a union, or intend to, and that in laying them off, they should lay off the employes who are members of an organization.

# LABOR'S NEW BILL IN PARLIAMENT.

## Legislation Introduced to Legalize Broader Trade Union Activity.

The guiding spirits of the Labor Party in Great Britain have presented to parliament its new Bill to legalize the expenditure of funds by trade unions in whatsoever manner directed by these organizations.

The text has been issued of the Trade Union Law Amendment (No.2) Bill, presented by Mr. Johnson, and supported by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. Enoch Edwards, Mr. James Haslam, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Keir Hardie, Mr. William Harvey, Mr. Hudson, Mr. George Roberts, Mr. Clynes, and Mr. Parker. The measure seeks to enact that a Trade Union shall have power, and shall be deemed always to have had power, whether acting by itself or in conjunction with any other Trade Union, Association, body, or person, to apply its funds, or any portion thereof, for or towards or in connection with--

(a) The purpose of procuring, or assisting to procure, the return of members of Parliament, or of any public or local authority, or of any other public body; or

(b) the purpose of providing, or partly providing, for the maintenance and other expenses of such members; or

(c) both such purposes;

and to do such other acts as may in the opinion of the Trade Union, be desirable in order to promote, whether by political action or otherwise, the interests of workmen.

## DEPARTMENTAL COERCION

---

Reprehensible Methods Adopted by Post-Office Officials in Denying Employes Right of Organization.

---

### INTIMIDATION BEING PRACTICED.

---

Clerks in Railway Mail Service met with Alternative of Leaving Their Employment or Affiliation in Unions.

---

Washington, April 8--Because the railway mail clerks have been forming local unions and securing charters from the American Federation of Labor, Second Assistant Postmaster-General Joseph Stewart instructed the division superintendents to inform the clerks that the Department considered it "inimical to the best interests of the Government" for them to form a secret organization and requested them to govern themselves accordingly. As a result of this order the clerks have been and are being informed that if they join a union they will be discharged. The Chief Clerk of the Railway Mail Service in San Francisco is calling the employes in that service into his office and asking that a document be signed which contains the following paragraph and pledge: "We will not join any brotherhood or labor union while in this service."

Notwithstanding this hateful form of intimidation, a great number refused to sign a pledge to abandon their union.

The hostility of the Post Office Department to the American Federation of Labor can not be explained, because thousands of Govern-

ment employes are now members of unions affiliated to the Federation.

Senators and Representatives are receiving letters protesting against the intimidation that these employes have to endure, and as a result of the protest a number of bills will be introduced to furnish the relief desired, as soon as Congress reconvenes, Monday, April 10.

Senator LaFollette says in a letter to the railway mail clerks, under date of March 31, 1911, that "the clerks have a right to organize, and if the officers of the Department are endeavoring to prevent them from doing so by threats of discharge such action is without legal authority or moral right," and if he finds conditions in the railway postal service as represented, he will introduce and do everything in his power "to pass a bill to prevent the continuation of such un-American practices, and to preserve to all Government employes the right of petition which belongs to every citizen, and the right to form or join organizations for the improvement of their labor conditions." Following is copy of the letter:

March 31, 1911.

My Dear Sir:

My attention has been directed to a letter of instructions issued by Second Assistant Postmaster General Stewart to division superintendents to the effect that it is "inimical to the interests of the Government" for clerks to organize, and "that it is incompatible with their obligation to the Department" for them to assume another obligation.

I am also informed that division superintendents and clerks in charge, in carrying out instructions, were directed "not to publish this * * * order, but let it go out by word of mouth," and upon receipt of this letter, ordered railway mail clerks to call at the office, and informed them "that the Department disapproves of organizations among railway postal clerks." This statement was supplemented by a question in substance as follows:

"Knowing this, will you continue active in the federation movement?"

I am advised that the clerks were given to understand that their continuance in the service depended upon the answer.

It is further represented to me that this system of intimidation has been, and is being carried on to such an extent that clerks have been prevented from exercising their right to join a union.

I desire to secure direct statements from railway mail clerks as to whether, in any way, they have been so threatened or intimidated. If you have been approached and an effort made to prevent you from joining or to force you to withdraw from a union or to cease your activities as a union man, state fully the circumstances, and be particular to state the date and place where such effort was made and the name or names of any officer or officers who made such effort, or were present when you were thus interviewed.

The railway mail clerks have the right to organize. If the officers of the Department are endeavoring to prevent them from so doing by threats of discharge, such action is without legal authority or moral right. If I find conditions in the railway postal service to be generally such as has been represented, I shall introduce and do everything in my power to pass a bill to prevent the continuation of such un-American practices, and to preserve to all Government employes the right of petition which belongs to every citizen, and the right to form or join organizations for the improvement of their labor conditions.

During January and February there was general complaint because certain changes in the regulations imposed added burdens upon the railway mail clerks. A conference between representatives of the railway postal clerks and the Post Office Department officials was subsequently held, at which it was claimed an understanding was reached that certain changes would be made, which would adjust the grievances of the clerks. I am desirous to obtain information as to the effect of these changes, and to know if they have resulted in removing the causes of complaint.

Inclosed is a blank, submitting questions to which I would be pleased to have you make reply. Your answer will be held confidential, except as to the facts stated, as it is my purpose merely to collect the information and present it to Congress without disclosing the names, or any circumstances which would lead to the identity of my informants.

Trusting to receive a prompt reply, I am,

Very truly yours,

ROBERT M. LAFOLLETTE.